

President's Message



David DeVidi, Philosophy

There have been two major issues that have occupied much of the time of the FAUW Board of Directors in the past couple of months: issues surrounding distant campuses, and the University's decision to "delay" spending, which has involved leaving faculty and staff positions at least temporarily unfilled, a decision by the library to stop buying books for several months, and delays on building projects.

Distant Campuses: In my previous President's Message, I reported that in response to expressions of discontent with the quality of answers at Senate to questions about one of UW's overseas initiatives, the proposed campus in the United Arab Emirates, the Senate was soliciting questions and

expressions of concern from faculty members and promising to answer them at the November Senate meeting. There had been some suggestion in discussions at Senate Executive Committee that the Senate had in the past approved the UAE initiative in principle, though nobody who had been there at the time remembered for sure. This turned out not to be so. This seemed to me, and to several other Senators, including the Presidents of the two student associations, not to be appropriate. Craig Sloss of the Graduate Student Association and I therefore asked, as members of Senate Executive Committee, that a motion to approve in principle the UAE initiative, as so far described to Senate, be put on the agenda for the November meeting. The rest of Senate Exec readily agreed.

I think the volume of thoughtful and difficult questions, and principled objections, that poured in was a surprise to many. Almost the whole of the November Senate meeting was devoted to discussion of the UAE motion. Many Senators have described it as the best Senate discussion they have seen. I cannot reproduce the whole of the discussion here, of course, but do draw your attention to the list of questions I compiled in response to the feedback I received from non-Senate faculty members and to the responses to questions provided by the Administration. (Please see

page 3 for the links to these reports.) I also heard from many Senators that they would not have been willing to vote in favour of the UAE initiative before the meeting, but were willing to do so after, in light of commitments the University made at the meeting.

Leaving out the details, and so most of the really interesting bits, I would say that the concerns I heard from faculty about UAE fall into three categories. (I set aside expressions of scepticism about the sustainability of the business model for present purposes.)

- Procedural worries: the initiative was going ahead without appropriate consultation with faculty and with Senate.
- Human rights issues of various sorts. (If the University won't put its logo on a shirt made with sweatshop labour, why will it put it on a building built by workers with no more rights than people working in sweatshops? How will women faculty feel when they have to

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Editorial	4
Highlights from CAUT Council	5
Grade Inflation at UW	7

(Continued from page 1)

wait in a grocery line-up until all the men are served before they can check out? How is the legal situation in UAE reconcilable with a commitment to academic freedom? See the list of questions for many compelling worries.)

- Equality of opportunity for faculty members. As one faculty member aptly noted, one thing feminist critiques of traditional business practices make clear is that the golf course has long been a locus of power in which important decisions are made in an informal setting that systematically excludes non-golfers, often women. If women faculty will not go to UAE, a similar sort of exclusion is possible. Teaching in UAE will be a lucrative undertaking for those willing to do it. If gay faculty cannot go there because homosexuality is illegal, they are excluded from an opportunity for reasons that should be irrelevant. If as a philosopher I can't boost my income by going to the UAE because it's engineering courses being taught there, no problem; if it's because of who I married, that's not so good. Similarly, faculty members who travel on Israeli passports will not be allowed into the UAE, and so are excluded on grounds that should be irrelevant.

I think there were two key commitments made by the University at the Senate meeting, which explains why some Senators changed their minds about whether they could support the initiative.

1. At the Senate meeting, the University's key officers stood

and announced to Senate that in future initiatives of similar importance to UAE will be brought to Senate for approval, and that this would happen *early enough in the process to make a difference*.

2. The University would consult with FAUW at the Faculty Relations Committee and return to Senate with proposals about effective ways to monitor the human rights and academic freedom situation for UW faculty, staff and students at distant campuses, and report to Senate about them.

It was also at the November Senate meeting that the Administration, in particular the Provost, Amit Chakma, made explicit the University's case in support of the UAE initiative. One key strand of that argument, it seems to me, was this: There are many parts of the world where the human rights situation is dire, including in many respects the UAE. On the other hand, there are important academic and financial advantages to the University of Waterloo, as it attempts to fulfill its mission in teaching and research, to becoming an international university. Whether to establish a presence in any particular country becomes a matter of weighing costs and benefits. There are countries to which UW would not go (e.g., countries where co-educational classes would not be allowed; or those where a UW faculty member arrested would be likely to disappear into a prison rather than being deported if caught doing something the authorities disapprove of, such as criticizing the government). However, the argument goes, in the case of the UAE, the advantages outweigh the

disadvantages.

I will not pronounce on the merits of this argument. I will note that, coupled with the commitments noted above, it carried the day at Senate.

In some sense, then, the first two sorts of issues were "resolved" at Senate. This leaves as the big outstanding concern the third sort of issue. It is one that, as President of FAUW and as someone who has always been proud to work at UW, leaves me troubled. It seems to me that now that the UAE initiative has been approved by Senate it will go ahead. I therefore ask that if you have ideas for ways to address this sort of unfairness you pass them along to me, or to another FAUW Board member. Your suggestion might be one that helps not just with the UAE, but with other initiatives.

Finally, while most of the discussion to date has been about the UAE initiative, this is merely a matter of circumstance. Similar issues could arise for many other initiatives, and not just those overseas. A fair number of faculty members that I talk to have questions about the seemingly ever-changing Stratford plans, for instance, that mirror concerns I hear about UAE; these include scepticism about the business plan, and a worry that the whole enterprise is being driven by a prior decision that UW will do *something* in this location, whether it makes any sense for the Faculty of Arts, and the University as a whole, or not. I hope the UAE discussion serves as a useful precedent, and that we see a similar willingness to insist on coherent answers to important questions at the relevant venues in Arts and, eventually, at Senate.

Finances and the Town Hall: I am sure that I don't need to tell you about the University Administration's decision to "slow down" spending in light of the impact of market conditions on the endowment and pension plan, and the impact the deteriorating finances of the Province of Ontario might have on university funding. I do want to acknowledge the efforts made by the University to make the Town Hall, at which the University President and Provost answered questions submitted by faculty and staff, as useful as possible. Gone were the PowerPoint presentations or lengthy sales speeches more appropriate for a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce. The answers were, by and large, as direct as one could expect, since neither was in a position to make commitments (e.g., "no layoffs") that circumstances, however unlikely, could force them to go back on in the future.

In advance of the meeting I asked faculty to send me questions,

which I compiled into a list and sent in. You can find the questions, and what I heard to be the answers, at the link given at the end of this message. You will notice that some of the questions we asked were not answered ... It turns out that this is because of some sort of email hiccup: while I sent them in by the deadline, they were not received by Chris Redmond, who put together the questions, until after the deadline.

One important question that many faculty asked, and so that made our list, but that did not reach the Town Hall, was this: Why is UW out of step with other Ontario universities? The Admin says we are financially healthy, but other universities have not announced similar hiring freezes. I want to answer that question here: at the OCUFA caucus at the recent meetings of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, I asked my colleagues whether their universities had imposed hiring freezes and similar spending

restraints. I can report that *almost all of them said yes, and many said that the freezes had been in effect for some time.*

ST JEROME'S UPDATE: When I talk to colleagues at SJU, they report that the situation has not materially changed, and that morale is low. The SJU Board of Governors has hired a consultant, Alexander Gregor, formerly a Professor of the History of Higher Education at the University of Manitoba. He is to "facilitate a process of listening and reflection upon the current situation at St. Jerome's University." The letter to faculty and staff that announces Gregor's appointment mentions his meeting with current faculty and staff, but not those who have recently left. My suspicion is that he will recognize the importance of meeting with those who have left for the sake of producing a useful report.

Links to reports mentioned in the President's Message:

Questions about the UAE campus:

<http://www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca/Links/OverseasInitiativesQuestions.pdf>

Administration response to UAE questions:

<http://www.secretariat.uwaterloo.ca/20081117uaeresponse.pdf>

Town Hall questions and responses:

<http://www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca/Links/TownHallQuestions.pdf>.

Editorial

David Wang, Electrical and Computer Engineering

As Christmas gets closer, my thoughts turn to what gifts to give my nine children. They are, as usual, quite keen on getting the latest electronics. For example, the newest computer games, perhaps a cell phone or maybe even a laptop. Of course, budgets being what they are, I suspect Santa Claus will be a tad cheap and disappointing this year. However, it does reflect a change in culture from our youth, when we desired Meccano sets, board games, dolls, skates and books. These were presents that arguably had a mental, social and physical component missing from today's gadgets.

In this edition of the FAUW Forum, we have a report on trends in grade inflation at the University of Waterloo. However, some of you may also be aware of a disturbing trend in some of our faculties where failure rates have jumped in an alarming fashion since 2004 and appear to be increasing. This is a fact also picked up in this intriguing report. Conventional wisdom usually points to the new high school curriculum, expansion of our programs and the double cohort. However, the new curriculum was firmly in place by 2002, the expansion has been in areas where the quality of the students has been very high and the double cohort occurred in 2003. Although it is still too early to nail down definitive causes, I do have my own theories about what is contributing to this trend from observing my children.

I believe, for instance, that computer games are part of the problem. Computer games take away tactile and physical interaction with the world. Physics, for example, in an electronic sports game are often fudged as it is too complicated to

incorporate real physical models into the graphics. Recently, I find more and more students don't have a grasp of simple physical concepts such as springs, friction and acceleration. The youth simply don't play in the real world, preferring instead to go into virtual computer worlds for their entertainment. Worse, the ability and patience of our future students to undertake an activity such as reading is replaced now replaced by games where the story is told for you without effort or imagination.

Another contributor, in my opinion, is computer social networks such as Facebook, MSN and text messaging. I am finding more and more high school students who do not understand that the concept of group projects requires actual meetings and brainstorming together. These electronic social networks create the possibility of a "cut and paste" project where the members do not actually ever sit in a room together. I have actually seen this happen with one of my high school kids. It also doesn't help that the shorthand "c u later" text messages are taking away the ability for our students to communicate effectively in full sentences.

Traditional ways of research have also been hijacked by Google and Wikipedia. Instead of referring to books or libraries, students now do all their research without ever leaving their computer. Despite our best efforts to warn about the poor reliability of these sources, students continue to rely solely on these tools. Even previously tedious tasks such as language translation can now be done, albeit poorly, using software tools easily available on the Internet. In the worse case scenario, students can cheat by presenting

material found on the Internet as their own.

I am convinced that the technologies that our children are clamoring for as gifts are the same tools that are rendering them unable to cope with university level academics and resulting in these higher failure rates. My suspicions were substantiated to an extent by a recent Maclean's article in the November 4th issue called "Dumbed Down" where some of these effects are discussed. One possible reaction to this increase in failure rates could be for faculty members to dilute our standards. The grade inflation trend could make this very tempting. However, we all need to be aware of these external forces affecting how young people learn and take steps to address them without lowering our standards. Some professors seem, in my opinion, to be continuing the same teaching strategies that they have used for decades, without recognition of the dramatic changes in their audience.

As a possible resource to further discuss these issues, I would like to encourage faculty members to go to our Online Forum and use the discussion forums that are there. These have just been revamped to make them easier to use. Simply go to www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca and then click on the "Online Forum" button. You will have to enter your uw userid and password (likely the same one you use to access myhrinfo and/or your wireless network access). You will have immediate access to the discussion forum at that point. This is an important topic and I hope that as many faculty members as possible can use this opportunity to work together to address these issues.

The National Scene: Highlights from the November CAUT Council

David DeVidi, *Philosophy*

CAUT censures FNU, moves to censure Acadia. CAUT Council voted unanimously to censure First Nations University of Canada, whose main campus is at the University of Regina. CAUT thereby asks faculty in Canada and internationally to refuse appointments at FNU, to refuse any awards from FNU, and to refuse invitations to speak or attend conferences there. CAUT will take steps to publicize the censure widely.

This is the first time CAUT has invoked censure in almost 30 years. Problems at FNU became a crisis in 2005 with the actions of the then-Chair of the Board of Governors, a vice-Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). He suspended several senior administrators and, accompanied by several people, stormed the university's offices and ordered the people working in them to leave, seized the central computers, and made copies of the hard drive that included all faculty and staff records. There have been egregious violations of academic freedom, the departure of many faculty members, and bargaining in bad faith with the University of Regina Faculty Association.

The main outstanding issue is the refusal to address the problems with the governance of the university that made these events possible in the first place. The FSIN itself set up an All Chiefs Task Force to recommend an appropriate (i.e., depoliticized) governance structure for the FNU, but has ignored the recommendation of its own task force. Instead, it has tinkered with the previous structure in a way that

leaves all the previous problems in place.

The problems at Acadia surround a tenured full professor who was fired without due process, and by all the available evidence without just cause, and the inexplicable refusal of the Acadia administration to discuss the matter with either the Acadia University Faculty Association or CAUT. CAUT received a letter from Acadia's lawyer threatening that "CAUT will be held legally responsible for any negative consequences to the University's reputation and the welfare of its students." I think it is worth quoting the response from Erin Patterson, President of AUFA, to this embarrassing statement: "Censure is a political act, not a legal one, and AUFA feels strongly that suing a person or a body for expressing an opinion is utterly incompatible with the purpose, principles and operating imperatives of Acadia University."

Travel to the US frequently? Think twice before opting for an "enhanced driver's license". As most UW faculty will know, there is a move afoot in Ontario to modify drivers' licenses so that they comply with US Homeland Security standards, the idea being to speed trips across the border compared to needing to show a passport to a border official. However, the standards currently in place involve the inclusion in the "enhanced" driver's license of a particular Radio Frequency Identification Chip that is not very secure. The information is unencrypted, and can be read with commercially available equipment

by anyone within 10 metres. Moreover, unlike similar chips in use in library books and some products in stores, it cannot be turned off. One imagines large retailers tracking which aisles you go down on your trips into stores, and that this might well be a way to get the discredited idea of a national ID card in place through the back door. The opportunities for forged licenses are probably also non-negligible.

"Secure flight" proposals. While it is alarming enough that the Canadian government is putting together its own "no fly" list, the proposed "US Secure Flight" plan is probably even more worrisome. For any flight that goes over the US, whether or not it lands there, airlines will need to send a large amount of data about each passenger to US authorities. They will determine whether you are allowed to board the flight, and whether some sort of security code is placed on your boarding pass. Passengers won't find out whether they'll be allowed on a flight until they reach the airport. And, of course, the US government will have information about where you spend your vacations, conference time, and sabbaticals.

Self-Censorship? A student at the University of Nottingham and the supervisor of his MA thesis were recently arrested for "possession of terrorist material." The student had downloaded material *from a US government web site* as part of his research for his MA thesis. One of many concerns about this is that it will lead to self-censorship in Brit-

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

ish universities. According to CAUT lawyers, Canadian law arguably would allow the same sort of thing to happen here. It strikes me as profoundly counterproductive if our laws limit the academic study of matters like international terrorism, even if indirectly by chilling the interest of students and academics by introducing the risk of arrest into serious pursuit of the topic. It also seems an important issue for the University of Waterloo, which is expanding its research attention to international affairs.

Meanwhile, the Canadian government continues to refuse to implement the second half of the O'Connor report into the Maher Arar case, which recommended

changes to the oversight of CSIS and the RCMP.

Freedom of Information requests:

A recent arbitrator's decision at the University of Ottawa should come as a relief both to faculty and to those in university administrations who must implement the Freedom of Information and Personal Privacy Act. The University of Ottawa, in response to a FIPPA request, had asked faculty to provide it with *all documents* that had anything to do with a particular topic, and "helpfully" offered to search professors hard drives for them. The arbitrator ruled that a university has a right only to documents in the university's "custody and control," and made clear that this is only a small subset of all the docu-

ments in a faculty member's possession. Of course, it's not precisely clear what is in a university's custody and control, and this will be larger for faculty when playing significant administrative roles, such as being Chair. The arbitrator has asked the University of Ottawa administration and faculty union to negotiate where the line is.

What's up at SSHRC? An interesting factoid: In 1996-97, the Council that runs SSHRC included 11 (non-administrator) faculty members and one representative from the corporate sector. The current membership includes 3 faculty members and 7 corporate representatives.

**Faculty Representatives Needed
for the
Employee Assistance Program Committee**

Term: January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2010
Meetings: 2:30-4:00 pm, third Tuesday each month

There are two openings for faculty representatives on the EAP Committee: one voting member and one alternate who would attend meetings, but vote only when the regular faculty representative is not present. The EAP Committee is charged with developing and implementing the EAP program, and with organizing EAP activities such as "brown bag" presentations and a variety of wellness events.

The Committee is advisory to the Associate Provost, Human Resources & Student Services, and has representatives from the Faculty and Staff Associations, CUPE Local 793, Counselling Services, Health Services and Human Resources.

Applicants should review the information contained in Policy 67, Employee Assistance Program (EAP): <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy67.htm>

If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Pat Moore at x33787.

Grade Inflation at the University of Waterloo

Greg Mayer
 PhD Candidate, Department of Applied Mathematics

Introduction

This article contains previously unpublished evidence of GI at the University of Waterloo (UW). Like many Canadian post-secondary institutions, undergraduate grade distribution data is not available to the general public on its website. Indeed, it is particularly difficult for any faculty member to be aware of temporal changes in grade distributions, as such information is not available without submitting a request to our Institutional and Analysis (IAP) office and subsequently processing the raw data to obtain desired statistics. However, it is hoped that this article will raise some awareness within the UW faculty of when, where, and how much GI occurred at UW from 1988/89 to 2006/07.

Evidence of Grade Inflation

Grades obtained from the IAP office at UW were analyzed to explore recent trends in course grade distributions (for a description of the obtained data, please see the full version of this article on the FAUW Online Forum). These grades were used to calculate grade distributions (Figure 1), obtained from all grades from all faculties and academic levels. In 1988/89, 25.22% of 100 level grades given were at least 80%. In contrast, 35.26% of 100 level grades were at least 80% by 2006/07. The increase in the number of A's was accompanied by decreases in the number of B and C grades.

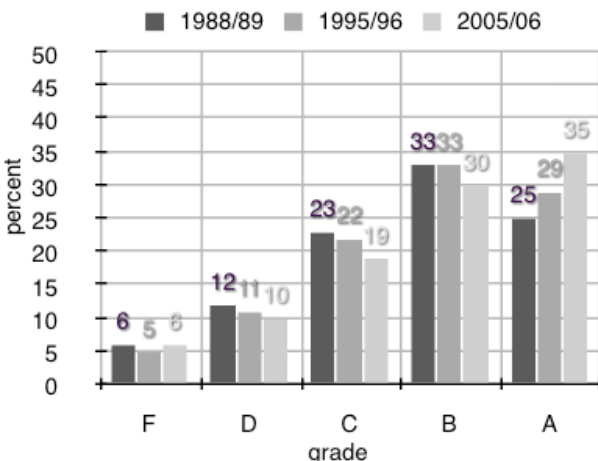


Figure 1. Grade distributions of all 100 level courses in all faculties for different academic years.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of undergraduate final grades that were at least 80% (or at least an A-) in each of our academic faculties.

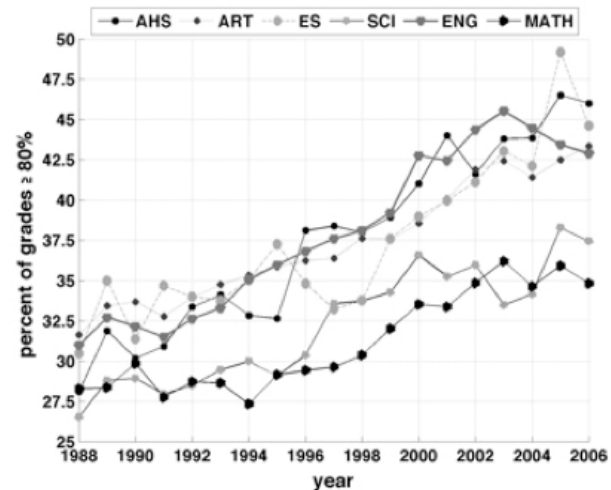


Figure 2. Fraction of grades that were at least 80% (or at least an A-) in all undergraduate courses for all six faculties from 1988/89 to 2006/07.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of grades that were less than 50% in each faculty.

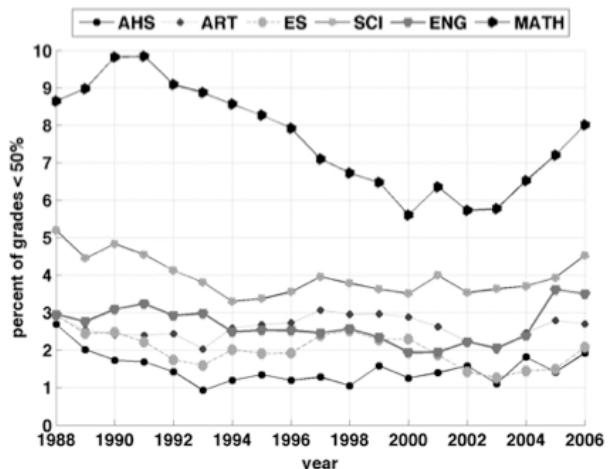


Figure 3. Percent of grades that were less than 50% (or less than a D-) for reach of the six faculties.

To some degree, grade inflation appears to be present in all academic faculties at UW during various time periods. Furthermore, grades in the ENG and MATH faculties may have stopped increasing after

2003/04, and failure rates seemed to have started to increase in 2003/04. This coincides with the “double cohort” year, when the government of Ontario removed Grade 13 in 2002/03. As a result, Grade 13 students from Ontario who graduated in the summer of 2003 were competing with graduating Grade 12 students to be admitted into Ontario universities. Concerns over the increasing failure rates in the Engineering faculty were expressed in March of this year in an Iron Warrior article [2]. Indeed, in 2005/06, the failure rate (3.62%) was higher than any other year since at least 1988/89.

Taking a closer look at the data, Figure 4 shows the distribution of all 100 level course grades in my faculty (the Faculty of Mathematics) in 1988/89 (black) and 2003/04 (grey). The median and mean of the 1988/89 distribution were 70 and 68.25, respectively. The median and mean of the 2003/04 distribution was 75 and 72.64. A large peak appears at 50%. Many instructors likely did not want (or could not) give final grades of 47%, 48%, or 49%, and instead gave these students a 50%. It is also interesting to note that peaks occurred at 70%, 80%, and 90% in both academic years.

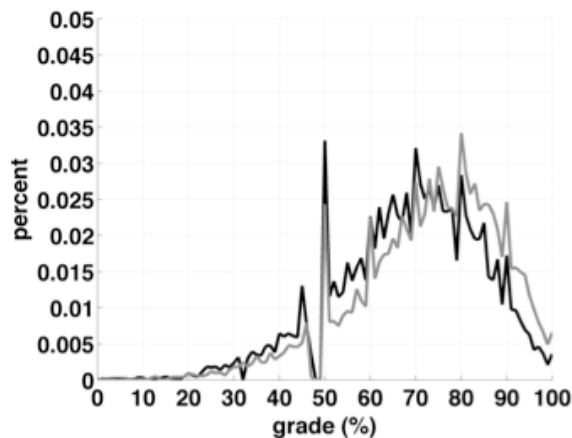


Figure 4. Distributions of 100 level grades in the Math faculty in 1988/89 (black), and in 2003/04 (grey).

The Impact of Grade Inflation

Several problems that GI presents to post-secondary institutions have been discussed in the pedagogical literature. For example, if GI is not uniform across different departments and faculties at a given institution, problems can be encountered that relate to course enrollment. Many students attempt to adjust their GPAs by choosing courses they will find easy, rather than through moderating their efforts [6].

As students gravitate away from courses and programs that tend to grade more stringently, course enrollment, instructor hiring, and department funding patterns are ultimately influenced in ways that are less than desirable.

Secondly, as grades are increased without a corresponding increase in student performance, those students who achieve high grades through great effort are justifiably concerned when their peers achieve similar grades with significantly less work. By over-rewarding mediocrity, *grade inflation discourages excellence*.

Furthermore, grades are relied upon by professional and graduate schools for summarizing student achievement. GI compresses all grades at the top of the scale, making it difficult to distinguish between good and outstanding students. Potential employers and graduate schools that do not (and can not) take into account different levels of GI, and therefore have difficulty relying on transcripts to make hiring and enrollment decisions.

Finally, giving higher grades to students than what they have earned gives them false feedback on their ability. Giving high grades to students who put in a modest amount of work is a disservice to the wider society that interacts with these students who are graduating with inflated impressions of their self efficacy [3].

Sources of Grade Inflation

One possible source of GI is that today's students are brighter than their predecessors. This may, for example, be the case if a faculty decides to raise its minimum high school grade entrance requirement. However, it would seem that if grades are rising because students are smarter, then students would likely also be less challenged by the institution and would receive a better education if standards were raised.

One of the most extensively researched sources of GI involves student evaluations of teaching (SET). SET ratings are used by administrators to make personnel decisions, such as salary, hiring, tenure, promotion, and awards. However, student grades are correlated with SET ratings (see for example [5,6,7]). A natural question to then ask is if instructors take advantage of this correlation to artificially inflate grades. Anecdotal evidence that grades can be artificially inflated to improve ratings is provided by results of a survey at the University of Western Ontario [3]. In

this survey, one professor wrote that he knew of professors who “pander to the students and give out higher grades before the evaluation”. Another instructor wrote that some instructors “teach to the evaluations ... by manipulating grades,” which he argued was “certainly the rational thing to do ... given the merit reward structure” at Western.

Finally, GI has been attributed to pressure placed on instructors from university administration. At the University of Waterloo, a survey of faculty members in Applied Health Sciences (AHS), Engineering, Science, and Math, found that instructors in the Math Faculty felt significantly more pressure to bell their grades than their peers in these other faculties [8]. This pressure was dramatically exemplified in that same year when the Dean of Mathematics increased final grades of an advanced calculus course without the professor’s knowledge or authorization [4].

Reform

GI makes it difficult for potential employers of graduating students to assess and compare students from different institutions and academic backgrounds. A solution to this situation is being addressed by some schools, which are now providing additional information on student transcripts [9]. Such information includes information about the number of students enrolled in each class, and the average grade in each class. This does not directly address GI, but helps employers put grades into perspective.

Few Canadian post-secondary institutions post grade distribution data on their website to be available for the general public. Without grade data available to the faculty members, it seems difficult for them to be aware of any changes in departmental grading standards. As such, having relevant and up-to-date grade statistics readily available would at the very least increase a level of transparency that would help future discussions on, for example, GI and changes in failure rates on our campus. These issues will likely be relevant to our faculty members in the future and may require a higher level of awareness and discussion.

Administrators at some universities maintain a desired grade distribution each year by encouraging some instructors to have their grades fit to a particular distribution, or by providing instructors each semester the departmental averages for their courses they teach [9]. However, one immediate problem with this approach is that students that have rela-

tively lower (or higher) grades than their peers in the classroom, regardless of their level of understanding of the course material, can receive grades that are above (or below) what they ought to be.

Given the correlation between course averages and SET, several solutions have been proposed to simultaneously increase the effectiveness of SET and reduce any dependency on SET ratings. Alternate methods of evaluating instructors with teaching observations or teaching portfolios can be used to obtain information about teaching quality for personnel decisions and decrease an over-dependency on SET [1].

Conclusions

It is difficult with only the data used in this article to determine the source of the GI observed from 1988/89 to 2006/07. Admittedly, the extent to which it was caused by any increase in the efforts and capabilities of our students is impossible to ascertain with only this data.

I also feel that the issues and data presented here deserve more attention and discussion within our campus, and I would be more than happy to present a more detailed analysis of this data to members of any department or faculty at UW. But at the very least, I hope this article will generate discussion on grading standards at UW and what measures, if any, UW faculty may want to consider to address the issues presented in this article.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Everett Vincent and the IAP office for providing the UW data used in this article. Svitlana Taraban-Gordon and the Center for Teaching Excellence are acknowledged for their assistance in the Spring 2008 semester with my grade inflation project which provided the basis for this research. I would also like to thank Edward Vrscay, Paul Nijjar, and David Wang for their ideas and encouragement.

References

- [1] Beran T, Vioato C, Kline D, What's the "use" of student ratings of instruction for administrators? One university's experience. *CJHE*, 37/1, 27-43, 2007

- [2] Cedrone K, Skyrocketing Failure Rates Under Investigation. *The Iron Warrior*, A Newspaper for the University of Waterloo Engineering Society, 29/4, 2008
- [3] Côté J, Allahar A, *Ivory Tower Blues*, University of Toronto Press. 2007
- [4] Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo (FAUW) Forum, issues 104, 105, 106, 111, 112, 113, 116, at <http://www.uwfacass.uwaterloo.ca>
- [5] Greenwald A, *Applying social psychology to reveal a major (but correctable) flaw in student evaluations of teaching*. 1996
- [6] Johnson V, *Grade inflation: A crisis in college education*. 2003
- [7] McKeachie W, Student Ratings: The Validity of Use. *American Psychologist*, 52/11, 1218-1225, 1997
- [8] Miller S, Goyder J, *The Eroding Standards Issue: A Case Study from the University of Waterloo*. *CJHE*, 30/3, 2000
- [9] Rosovsky H, Hartley M, *Evaluation and the academy: Are we doing the right thing?* Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2002
- Note: A more complete version of this article with more analysis is available on the FAUW Online Forum (<http://www.fauw.uwaterloo.ca>)*

FAUW Forum

The FAUW Forum is a service for UW faculty sponsored by the Association. It seeks to inform members about current Association matters, to promote the exchange of ideas and to foster open debate on issues with a wide and balanced spectrum of views.

Opinions expressed in the Forum are those of the authors, and ought not to be perceived as representing the views of the Association or its Board of Directors unless so specified. Members are invited to submit letters, news items and brief articles.

If you do not wish to receive the Forum, please contact the Faculty Association Office and your name will be removed from the mailing list.